

# SAFETY MESSAGE

## Your Personal Safety is our #1 Priority

### Preventing Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

#### Symptoms

Your wrist aches. Your fingers feel numb. You have difficulty doing even the most simple tasks such as opening a juice jar. What's going on?

It may be that you suffer from carpal tunnel syndrome, a hand disorder resulting from repetitious, forceful motion of the hands and wrists.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is common and affects those of us who use the same hand motions over and over again at work or at home.

Fortunately, you don't have to "grin and bear it." Carpal tunnel syndrome is often preventable through positioning and hand exercises.

#### Why it hurts

The carpal tunnel is the bony cavity in your wrist through which your nerves and tendons extend to the hand. When you repeat the same hand and wrist motion day in and day out, the excess strain causes tendons to swell and press on the main nerve of the hand.

This persistent irritation of the nerve can result in pain, numbness, and dysfunction not only in the hands and wrists, but may extend up the forearm and elbows as well.

#### What you can do about it

If you are at risk for developing carpal tunnel syndrome, why not try to prevent the condition before it occurs?

By learning how to position your hands properly and by exercising your hands regularly, you can relieve excess pressure on your tendons and nerves and prevent unnecessary pain and disability.

#### Hand positioning

You place less pressure on the tendons and nerves in your hands when you keep your wrists and elbows straight. Try adjusting your work so that you can keep your forearms and hands straight.

Use hand tools with the appropriate width, size, and shape. Make sure you can grip the tool comfortably, that the tool can absorb vibration, and that handles are positioned to keep your wrists and hands in alignment.

#### Hand exercises

Certain exercises, when done daily, can help strengthen wrist and hand muscles, and help relieve repetitive strain caused by tasks requiring repetitive motions.